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# THE PRESENT POSITION OF THE PHILOSOPHICAL SCIENCES

*AN INAUGURAL LECTURE*

BY

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## PREFATORY NOTE

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THE title of this Lecture may seem to promise too much. The Lecture does not profess to deal with the circle of the philosophical sciences, but only with the subjects traditionally associated with a Chair of Logic and Metaphysics in Scotland. Moreover, as the occasion demanded, it is addressed not so much to the expert as to the large general public interested in philosophy.



## INAUGURAL LECTURE.

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YOU will not find it wonderful if my feelings are deeply stirred in appearing before you to-day for the first time in my new capacity. There is no honour or privilege which I could possibly esteem higher than to teach philosophy in my own *alma mater*, and in the capital of my native land—to teach, moreover, in the Chair which, through the lustre of its occupants for half a century, is, in the mind of the country (I think I may say it without offence) in some respects the most famous of Scottish philosophical Chairs. All this is deeply gratifying. But it also lays a heavy responsibility upon him who succeeds to such great traditions. He who did not feel diffident at stepping into the place of these eminent men would be unworthy of the trust committed to him. I am deeply sensible of my

own deficiencies, but I hope, if it is granted me, to live and learn.

It is also a very gratifying experience to join as a colleague those who were the guides of one's youth. All are not here; but of the seven Professors of the Arts curriculum in my time only two have been removed by death. One, the genial and universally beloved Kelland, passed away in the ripeness of his years. The other leaves an untimely gap, which speaks of recent loss and a common sorrow. One whose welcome to-day would have sounded with peculiar pleasantness in my ears, the generous and high-souled Sellar, has gone from us too soon; and to those who knew him, his loss seems not less but greater as the days go by.

All the more is it matter of heartfelt satisfaction to me that no such painful gap exists in connection with my own Chair—that I succeed my honoured and beloved teacher while he is yet among us in full health and in the unimpaired vigour of his powers. Long may he live to counsel us wisely and inspire us by his example, and to embody in literary form the ripe results of a life's reflection. In these circumstances, and in his presence, it is not for me to pronounce any eulogy upon his thirty-five years

of strenuous and fruitful work in this university, or to attempt to sum up his happily unfinished achievement. But I will at least record a little of what I personally owe to him. He taught me to think; and in the things of the mind that is the greatest gift for which one man can be indebted to another. Seventeen years ago I entered the Junior Logic class of this university, with a mind opening perhaps to literature, but still substantially with a schoolboy's views of existence; and there, in the admirably stimulating lectures to which I listened, a new world seemed to open before me. What the student most needs at such a period is to be intellectually awakened. The crust of custom has to be broken, and the sense of wonder and mystery stirred within him. He should not be crammed with ready-made solutions of difficulties he has never been made to feel. Rather should he be sent "voyaging through strange seas of thought alone." He has to be induced to ask himself the world-old questions, and to ponder the possible answers. Above all, the listener should be made to feel that the questions of which the Professor speaks are not merely information which he communicates—that they are to him the most real things in the world, the recurring subjects of

his deepest meditation. All this his students found realised in Professor Fraser's teaching. His sympathetic exposition enabled us to catch the spirit of the most diverse standpoints, while his searching criticism prevented us from resting in any of those facile solutions which owe their simplicity to the convenient elimination of intractable elements. The sense of mystery and complexity in things, which he brought so vividly home to us, inspired a wise distrust of extreme positions and of systems all too perfect for our mortal vision. This union of dialectical subtlety with a never-failing reverence for all that makes man man, and elevates him above himself, lives in the memory of many a pupil as no unworthy realisation of the ideal spirit of philosophy. I shall count myself happy if, with his mantle, some portion of his spirit shall be found to have descended upon his successor. I hope that, in the days to come, the dingy but famous class-room will be distinguished as of old by searching intellectual criticism and impartial debate, not divorced from that spirit of reverence and humility which alone can lead us into truth.

That reminds me that you will expect to hear

from a new Professor some indication of the view he takes of his subject, and of the present outlook in connection with it. Anything that can be said on an occasion like the present must necessarily be of a very general character, but even so it may have a certain interest and usefulness.

The discipline of the Chair, then, seems to me to be of a threefold character—logical, psychological, and metaphysical or philosophical in the strict sense. That is to say, we study, in the first place, the nature of the reasoning process, or, to be more accurate, the nature of proof or evidence—the conditions to which valid reasoning must conform. In the second place, we study, introspectively and otherwise, the phenomena of consciousness. We bring observation and experiment to bear upon those internal facts which are for each of us the only facts immediately present to us, the facts through which we know all other facts. We try to analyse and lay bare the inmost nature of those functions of knowing, feeling, and willing which lie “closer to us than breathing, nearer than hands or feet,” which constitute, in fact, our very life, the expression of the self in time. In the third place, we study, under the title of philosophy proper, the twofold question of Knowing and Being. On the one hand, we investigate

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human knowledge as to its constitutive notions and its scope or validity ; we discuss the question of the possibility of knowledge, as it is called, or the relation of knowledge to reality. This is what is termed Epistemology or Theory of Knowledge. On the other hand, so far as the discussion has not been already anticipated, we approach those questions as to the ultimate nature, the origin and destiny, of all that is, which have occupied the speculative intellect of mankind from the dawn of history, and will occupy it till its close. These may be embraced under the special title of Metaphysics, both Epistemology and Metaphysics falling under the wider designation of philosophy.

These three lines of training—the logical, the psychological, and the philosophical—are cognate, and the first two are in a measure introductory or propædeutic to the third. Both logic and psychology, at all events, if we go beneath the surface, lead us into the very heart of philosophical difficulties ; and most treatments of either subject involve a tissue of metaphysical assumptions, of which the writer is, in all probability, either quite unconscious or only half aware. But though the subjects are thus cognate and continuous, and so fitly combined under one Chair, the

discipline they afford has in each case a character of its own. Logic gives a training almost purely abstract or formal, comparable in some respects with the mental discipline of mathematics—a training in clearness of thinking, in accuracy of definition, in appreciation of what is meant by demonstration or proof. Psychology brings us face to face with a concrete subject-matter—the actual facts of mental life. It views these facts, partly in themselves, but largely in their connection with material conditions and accompaniments. So far as it approaches these facts by the ordinary methods of observation and experiment, classifying them and endeavouring to resolve complex phenomena into their simplest constituents or causes,—so far it affords a scientific discipline comparable to that gained, say, in the study of one of the natural sciences. And if it often lacks the exactness of the sciences of external nature, it has the advantage, as compared with them, of cultivating fresh powers of mind through the attitude of reflection or introspection which it is forced to take up. Self-observation or introspection is by no means so easy as the observation of a foreign object. We can more easily analyse a substance in a phial before us than we can analyse the exact nature of what passes at any moment

in our own mind. Hence Psychology, which incessantly calls for the exercise of this faculty, and sharpens and perfects it by constant use, was justly praised by Hamilton as one of the best gymnastics of the mind. Philosophy carries us into a more difficult region ; for here we deal not with any particular department of fact, but with the ultimate principles of knowledge and the ultimate constitution or meaning of the cosmos as such, including the prior question whether we are justified in speaking of a cosmos or orderly unity at all. These are questions of supreme and intimate concern to us all, seeing that they embrace the question of man's place and destiny in relation to the system of things. He to whom they have no voice must be either less or more than man. And I fail to see how any one can lay claim to a liberal education who is ignorant of what has been thought by the great minds of the past upon these subjects, or who is unacquainted with the elements of the problems as they face us to-day. The rudiments of such a knowledge are necessary, were it for nothing else, to enable any one to take an intelligent part in the incessant discussion and conflict of opinion which is so marked a feature of the present time.

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This threefold discipline may be justified, therefore, in a liberal curriculum, whether we look at it from the formal side as a discipline of mental powers otherwise untrained—as the cultivation of one whole side of human nature—or on the concrete side as a communication of knowledge of singular importance and interest. And its permanent value seems to me so high and unimpeachable in both these respects that it needs no defence at my hands. A defence is generally a confession of weakness. In offering such for philosophy, “we do it wrong, being so majestical.”

I turn, therefore, by preference, to say a little about the present outlook in the three departments to which reference has been made, and the way in which it seems to me that a philosophical Professor should shape his work at the present time. Logic I will pass over lightly—almost with a word—because of the three, its discussions are most technical in character. It appeals, therefore, least to a general audience. Moreover, if we penetrate beneath the surface and examine the foundations on which it rests, we are immediately involved in difficult questions of general philosophy; and it becomes impossible to maintain a rigid distinction between Logic and

Epistemology and Metaphysics. For that reason the very conception or definition of the science has long been matter of keen debate, and at present the aspect of things is confessedly chaotic. The activity, however, in the higher theory of logic has of late been great both in this country and in Germany. I need only refer to the important treatises of Lotze, Sigwart, and Wundt in Germany, and of Bradley and Bosanquet in this country, not to speak of the more distinctively English work of Jevons, Venn, and others. The chaos, moreover, if at first bewildering, is not of the kind which should be disheartening to the serious student. It is of the kind which portends and accompanies growth, and bears in it the promise of future order. Evidently, however, such discussions do not lend themselves to exoteric exposition; they belong to the labours of an advanced class of metaphysics.

The other aspect of Logic is the elementary doctrine which has so long formed part of the curriculum of educated Europe—the ordinary formal logic, originally based upon Aristotle, to which has come to be added some discussion of the theory of scientific method and the conditions of inductive proof. It has been the fashion of late with many philosophers to sneer at the logic

of the schools ; but this is only justifiable, as it seems to me, when extravagant claims are made on its behalf. No doubt the ordinary logic depends on many uncriticised assumptions ; its analysis of the process of thought is often superficial ; it cannot stand as a coherent philosophical doctrine. All this is granted. The whole discipline is essentially of an elementary and propædeutic character ; it is a continuation, in a more abstract form, of the grammatical training received at school. But just this circumstance, that it continues and attaches itself to the studies of the school, gives it a peculiar claim to stand as the gateway of the philosophical sciences ; whilst, on the other hand, the very defects and ambiguities which discussion reveals in many of its conceptions form an excellent stimulus to the opening mind, and introduce the student insensibly to important psychological and metaphysical problems. The formal mechanism may certainly, in great part, be relegated with advantage to text-book work and tutorial instruction. But even this is not to be despised ; I have always found it an admirable test in picking out the really clear-headed members of a class. Here there are no cloudy phrases in which to take refuge ; the issue is as clear and definite as in a mathematical proposition, and in-

accuracy of mind is tracked remorselessly down. In view of these merits, which the study undoubtedly possesses, I cannot share the contempt frequently expressed for the logic of the schools. Its names and distinctions, moreover, have entered so largely into the thought, and even the familiar language, of the civilised races, that a certain acquaintance with its forms and processes may well be demanded in the interests of historical culture.

It is not so long since a somewhat similar contempt for Psychology was current in the leading idealistic school of this country. The horror of the true-blue experientialist for what he calls "metaphysics" was amply repaid by the tone of condescension and indifference which the idealists adopted towards "empirical psychology." Misled by a name, they visited upon the head of an unoffending science the inadequacies of Empiricism as a philosophical theory. Because the chief cultivators of psychology in England had been of the Empiricist persuasion, and had frequently confounded the limits of psychology and metaphysics, the transcendentalists tabooed the science as beneath the notice of a philosopher. Hence a state of unnatural division and mutual distrust—a distrust rooted in both cases largely in ignorance.

To-day the situation is greatly changed. Psychology has become more scientific, and has thereby become more conscious of her own aims, and, at the same time, of her necessary limitations. Ceasing to put herself forward as philosophy, she has entered upon a new period of development as science ; and in doing so she has disarmed the jealousy, and is even fast conquering the indifference, of the transcendental philosopher. For whatever be the bearing of these psychological investigations upon philosophy—be their importance in that connection great, or be it small—it is at least certain that in the near future no philosopher will speak with authority, or will deserve so to speak, who does not show a competent acquaintance with the best work in psychology.

The marvellous activity displayed just at present in the department of psychology constitutes, indeed, to an expert perhaps the most notable feature in the state of the philosophical sciences. In Germany and France, in America, and now in England, there may almost be said to be a “boom” in that direction. In Britain the study of psychology is a native growth, and it had long flourished in the hands of the Associationists, such as Hartley, James and John Mill, and Professor

Bain. But before such a school was heard of by name, the works of Hobbes, Locke, Berkeley, and Hume had brilliantly exemplified the national genius in that direction. As already indicated, however, the British thinkers of the past were far from keeping their psychology unadulterated. Betraying frequently an insular ignorance of the great metaphysical systems of ancient Greece and modern Europe, they gave us, in general, psychology and philosophy inextricably intermingled. The impulse towards a differentiation of provinces came from Germany, where the clearer formulation of aims and methods may be regarded as one beneficial result of the training which the German intellect has enjoyed at the hands of Kant and succeeding thinkers. But the influence of Germany upon psychological investigation has not been limited to this formal or methodic stimulus. There has been much good work done there in psychology since the time of Kant. The psychology of Herbart and his followers is in many respects the more elaborate counterpart of English Associationism; and artificial as his constructions often seem, it is acute and able work, which no modern student of the subject can afford to neglect. The names of Lotze and Wundt represent work at once brilliant and patient on inde-

pendent lines, and bring before us also the close connection between psychology and physiology, which is the distinguishing mark of most recent investigation in this department. Some of Lotze's most characteristic work was contained in the book he called 'Medical Psychology,' and 'Physiological Psychology' is the name Wundt gives to his important treatise. Psychology, physiology, and physics meet in the great works of Helmholtz on 'Sensations of Tone' and 'Physiological Optics.' Another mark of recent investigation is the potent influence exerted on psychology, as on all other departments of knowledge, by the conception of evolution. Wherever life is met with, there the psychologist now finds material for illustrating and enlarging his science. The old meaning of  $\psi\nu\chi\eta$  has been revived, and the beginnings of a comparative psychology have come into being. The observation of abnormal mental developments, such as insanity, hysteria, the hypnotic state, and similar phenomena, forms another field assiduously cultivated by modern observers, especially in France, where, no less than in Germany and America, there is a large amount of psychological activity among the younger men.

All these influences may be said to meet and

come to fruition in the best English work of the last few years—such work, I mean, as Mr Ward's masterly treatise in the 'Encyclopædia Britannica,' and the rich and stimulating volumes published a year ago by Professor James of Harvard. Such work may not unreasonably be taken as marking the new departure that has been achieved in psychology—the critical maintenance of a purely psychological standpoint, the wider range of material, the more minute and experimental analysis.

For one of the most striking results of the *rapprochement* between psychology and physiology just referred to has been the attempt to introduce experiment into psychological science. Starting from the experiments of Weber and the more extended psycho-physical researches of Fechner, but taking a wider scope, there has sprung up a new line of inquiry, which, under the name of Experimental Psychology, sometimes aspires to the dignity of a separate discipline, and looks back with no little condescension upon the observational and descriptive science with which we are familiar. Wundt has been the leader of this movement, and Leipzig its great centre; but it is now widely spread in Germany, and has been enthusiastically taken up in America, where every well-equipped

college aims at the establishment of a psychological or psycho-physical laboratory. England shows some disposition to follow in the wake. At least the University of Cambridge has voted a small sum for the same purpose, and the younger generation of Oxonians are found deserting the philosophy of Green to work in the laboratories of Freiburg, Leipzig, and Berlin.

Let me say at once, to prevent misconception, that I think the experimental psychologists magnify their office overmuch. The field of experiment is necessarily limited ; it is limited to those cases where we are able to manipulate the physical and physiological processes which condition mental facts. The facts of sensation, the phenomena of movement, and the time occupied by the simpler mental processes, constitute, therefore, practically the whole accessible area. Within these limits, moreover, the results are often so contradictory as to leave everything in doubt ; where definite results are obtainable, their value is often not apparent. Finally, many of the results are of a purely physiological nature, and are only by courtesy included in psychological science. These are the serious deductions which I think require to be made by a dispassionate observer of all this eager work. But the appetite for facts

is a healthy symptom, and the whole movement is one which every student of psychology must take note of. We need not look for light from this quarter upon the problems of philosophy and the deeper mysteries of being ; but it is impossible that so much patient ingenuity should be devoted to analysing the substructure of our mental life without ultimately important effects upon our knowledge of the psychological mechanism.

A collateral effect of this scientific development of psychology has been an immense increase of detail-work. Already it is becoming more and more the practice for psychologists to publish elaborate monographs on special phenomena, or on comparatively small departments of the subject. The number of psychological journals has also largely increased. One result of this is obvious. As psychology becomes increasingly scientific in character, and as the literature of the subject becomes more and more voluminous, the severance between philosophy and psychology must necessarily become more pronounced ; for it will become impossible for the same man to do original work in both departments. From the point of view of philosophy there might seem to be a certain advantage in this, as effectually preventing any further confusion between the two spheres and sets of prob-

lems. But this advantage is more apparent than real. For psychology as the science of mental life must always stand to philosophy in a more intimate relation than any of the other sciences can. If the divorce, then, be carried so far that the philosopher and psychologist are no longer on speaking terms, the old evils will recur; for a critical severance of provinces can be effected and maintained only by one who is familiar with both departments, even though his original work should lie only in one. It is to be hoped, therefore, that the psychologists of the future will all be trained in philosophy, and the philosophers in psychology. With this view, and in the present situation of affairs, I cannot help adding that it seems to me extremely desirable, in a great university like this, that there should be a third man connected with the philosophical department—a Lecturer or Assistant-Professor—specially charged with the teaching of psychology in its most recent developments. Such work would lie, of course, largely with Honours students; for psychological detail could not profitably replace to the Passman that introduction to the problems of philosophy and the history of thought which the retention of the Chair in a liberal curriculum is meant to ensure.



To Philosophy, then, we come in the last place. It is by philosophy that this Chair and others like it in the Scottish universities must ultimately justify their existence; and it is to the inbred Scottish bend towards philosophy that the public interest felt in them is due. The outlook here is not discouraging. Within the present century, as is well known, Comte promulgated his law of the three stages, representing metaphysics as a disease of childhood, like measles, which the race was in the act of outgrowing. And since then Comtian and other influences have undoubtedly produced in many quarters a positivistic or agnostic attitude of mind, which gives itself great airs of finality from time to time in our newspapers and reviews. But metaphysics shows no inclination to die by way of obliging these prophets of her decease. It is sufficient answer to their vaticinations to point to the marked revival of interest in philosophical discussion within recent years. There was a period, perhaps, when philosophical interest languished, but there has seldom been a time when people were more anxious than they are at present to listen to any one who has anything to say. For indifferentism here, as Kant says, can be, in the nature of the case, no more than a temporary phase of feeling.

“It is in reality vain to profess indifference in regard to such inquiries, the object of which cannot be indifferent to humanity.”

Apart from indifference, there was a time when the vast strides made by science—more especially by the natural sciences in the third quarter of the present century—fascinated men’s attention, and diverted it from the problems which lie beneath and behind all science. But the very progress of science has brought men face to face once more with ultimate questions, and has revealed the impotence of science to deal with its own conditions and presuppositions. The needs of science itself call for a critical doctrine of knowledge as the basis of an ultimate theory of things. The idea entertained in some quarters that all difficulties would be solved by a scientific conception like that of evolution, has been found illusory, inasmuch as that conception itself requires a philosophical interpretation before it can throw any light at all upon the metaphysical question. History is not philosophy, and nothing is explained merely by being thrown back in time. Evolution notwithstanding, the old questions all reappear in a slightly altered form. They are brought to light again by the very success of science in dealing with her own problems.

Philosophy is first, then, at the present day, a doctrine of knowledge ; and as such the critic of scientific categories, to purge us of bad metaphysics. For the sweeping away of bad metaphysics is not the least important part of the philosophical task, and there is no metaphysics so bad as the metaphysics of the physicist or biologist when, in the strength of his own right arm, he makes a raid into philosophical territory. This critical office of Philosophy must also be extended to the metaphysical systems of the past. And in this connection we have one of the richest parts of the training afforded by a philosophical Chair ; for here the teacher must constitute himself the historian of thought, and, with a wise admixture of sympathy and criticism, introduce his hearers to the typical thinkers of the world—

“ The dead but sceptred sovrans who still rule  
Our spirits from their urns.”

But this critical, and to a certain extent negative, work is not all. Philosophy must finally endeavour to be itself critically constructive, or, if that is a contradiction in terms, it must endeavour to be constructive without forgetting its own critical strictures. The criticism of past

philosophies, therefore, should not be purely negative. Truly light-giving and helpful criticism should seek to lead the learner, through the very consciousness of defects and inconsistencies in the systems examined, to a truer statement of the problem, and a more adequate solution. In this way the systems of the past become so many stepping-stones on which we rise to fuller and clearer insight. And if, at the end, a completed system should still prove beyond our reach, the philosophical teacher will at least seek to indicate the general lines upon which an ultimately satisfactory theory must move.

I have only time here to mention one or two points on which I think that a true philosophy should lay stress, and on which it should lay special stress at the present time. The first is the necessity of a *teleological* view of the universe. Trendelenburg, the eminent German Aristotelian, devotes one of the most interesting of his essays to illustrating what he calls the fundamental difference or antithesis between philosophical systems,—the difference, namely, between the teleological and the mechanical point of view. Whether an exhaustive classification of systems is possible on this basis or not, I believe with him that the antithesis he signalises is fundamental for phil-

osophy, and there is nothing of which I am more profoundly convinced than that philosophical truth lies in this case altogether with the teleological point of view. Any system which abandons this point of view lapses thereby from philosophy to science.

The word teleology acts upon some people like a red rag upon a bull, from its association with certain old-fashioned arguments which explained particular phenomena from their supposed adaptation to external ends, more especially from their adaptation to the requirements and conveniences of man. This paltry mechanical teleology was never at any time convincing to strong and sincere thinkers, and after being riddled by modern science, it may be held as finally beaten off the field. Its unsatisfactory character arose in great part from its taking facts in isolation, and then endeavouring artificially to fit them together in the relation of means and end. The philosophical teleology of which I speak concerns itself only with the End of the whole evolution. It concentrates itself upon the proof that there *is* an End, that there is an organic unity or purpose binding the whole process into one and making it intelligible—in one word, that there *is* evolution and not merely aimless change.

For it is only when contemplated in the light of a realised idea that any one speaks of a series of changes as steps in an evolution. A speculation which does not see that evolution spells purpose has not made clear to itself the difference between progress and aimless variation. Such speculation rests ultimately on a purely mechanical view of the universe.

Let us try, therefore, in a sentence or two, to illuminate by contrast these two opposite points of view. The mechanical view explains the universe as a collocation of mere facts—so many real existences which just happen to be there. They are not there to express any idea, meaning, or purpose: they have no further significance; they simply are. Every change in these facts is completely determined by its immediate antecedents acting as a blind *vis a tergo*. A cause may thus be assigned for every change, but a reason can be given for none, for where there is no question of realising any idea or purpose, all change must be entirely motiveless. One collocation of facts is just as good as another. The mechanical explanation of things is thus a constant looking backward; the teleological or philosophical explanation, a looking forward to the end or ultimate purpose which is being

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realised—to the *reason* of the whole development, which is also in the deepest sense its cause.

The mechanical explanation of any phenomenon is not false in itself. Nor need there be any quarrel between the causal and the teleological view of things, for they move upon different planes. The mechanically causal view only becomes false when it professes to be a complete explanation of any phenomenon, and therefore by implication a philosophy of the universe. True, under certain limitations, as science, it is false when it puts itself forward as philosophy. Mechanical explanation is a *progressus in infinitum*, which can ultimately explain nothing. In the last resort, *causæ efficientes pendent a finalibus*; the complete explanation of anything is only reached when we are able to view it in the light of a purpose of which it forms an integral part or element. Philosophy, therefore, stands or falls with the possibility of discovering a reasonable meaning or end in the universe. Every true philosophy is in this sense an attempted theodicy—the vindication of a divine purpose in things.

The antithesis of teleology and mechanism is, as you perceive, substantially the old opposition of Idealism and Materialism more strictly expressed. And it is equally obvious that while

the mechanical view, through looking ever backward, finds an explanation of things in reducing them to their lowest terms, and presents us, for example, with matter and motion as philosophical ultimates, the teleological or idealistic view seeks the true explanation of the lower in the higher, of which it is the germ. For *if* the lower carries in it the promise and potency of the higher, then it must involve no less than a falsification of the facts to substantiate the lowest terms as independent self-existent facts, out of relation to the ultimate term in which we read the meaning of the whole development. That, however, is precisely what is done by all materialistic and *quasi*-materialistic systems.

If philosophy, then, is the indication of an end, meaning, or purpose in the universe, what has philosophy to say, finally, as to the nature of the End? Here again it seems to me that philosophy has to wage unsparing battle against certain tendencies of our time. As it defends the truth of teleology in spite of former abuses of the principle, so it has to champion the truth underlying the old view which made man the centre of the universe. In a material aspect, man is but an atom, or a point in the system of things, and we smile when we read in Cicero of the

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heavenly ædile who nightly lights the candles of the sky for our mortal comfort and convenience. But the Copernican view of the universe is pressed too far when we are invited, on the strength of it, to efface ourselves before the immensities of external nature. Much current thought is *naturalistic* at heart—that is to say, it makes human nature only a part of nature in general, and seeks, therefore, to explain away the most fundamental characteristics of intelligence and moral life. As against this naturalistic current, philosophy must be unflinchingly *humanistic*, anthropocentric.

Not to man as a creature specially located upon this earth, but to man and all creatures like him who are sharers in the life of thought, and called thereby to be authors of their own perfection—to man as rational all things are relative. To him the creation looks; for him all things are made. This is the imperishable grandeur of Hegel's system that he has given such sonorous utterance to this view, and expressed it with such magnificent confidence. I cannot always emulate his confidence, nor can I adopt as perfectly satisfactory his universalistic mode of expression. The achievements of the world-spirit do not move me to unqualified admiration, and I cannot accept

the abstraction of the race in place of the living children of men. Even if the enormous spiral of human history is destined to wind itself at last to a point which may be called achievement, what, I ask, of the multitudes that perished by the way? "These all died, not having received the promises." What if there *are* no promises *to them*? To me the old idea of the world as the training-ground of individual character seems to offer a much more human, and, I will add, a much more divine, solution than this pitiless procession of the car of progress. Happily, however, the one view does not necessarily exclude the other; we may rejoice in the progress of the race and also believe in the future of the individual. Nature's profusion and nature's waste will doubtless be urged against us, when we plead for the rights of the individual life. But these are objections which every theodicy has to meet. I do not wish to minimise them: on the contrary, they appeal to me with painful force. But the possibility of any theodicy depends on our being able to show that nature and nature's ways of working are not the last word of creation. Nature is non-moral, indifferent, and pitiless; but man is pitiful, and human nature flowers in love and self-denial, in purity and stainless honour. If

these have no root in the nature of things, then indeed

“ The pillared firmament is rottenness,  
And earth’s base built on stubble.”

But we do well, as Goethe teaches in one of his finest poems, to recognise in such attributes of human-kind our nearest glimpse into the nature of the divine. The part is not greater than the whole ; and we may rest assured that whatever of wisdom and goodness there is in us was not born out of nothing, but has its fount somewhere and somehow in a more perfect Goodness and Truth.









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